

# **Virginia Saltwater Development Fund Evaluation of a Proposal for the Development of a Research or Data Collection Project**

**Project Number: 0606-9**

**Date: 11 September 2006**

**Title: I) Monitoring Mycobacteriosis in Chesapeake Bay Striped Bass  
*Morone saxatilis*: Tracking the State of the Epizootic.**

“The Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund is to be used solely for the purpose of conserving and enhancing finfish taken by recreational anglers, enforcing laws related to natural resource conservation, improving recreational fishing opportunities, obtaining necessary data and conducting research for fisheries management, and creating or restoring habitat for species taken by recreational fishermen.”

Code of Virginia, Section 28.2-302.3

**NOTE: Please read the entire scoresheet before beginning, then provide comments, and circle ( ) the appropriate score for each item. Thank You.**

**A. Problem Description and Resolution (20 points)**

- 1. Comment on the adequacy of the problem description, background information, knowledge of available literature/data sources, and anticipated benefits.**

Background information provided was very complete. This project should be viewed as an ongoing component of the detection and impact of Mycobacteriosis on Chesapeake Bay striped bass. A major benefit is the study will continue the tracking of infection rate of Mycobacteriosis in striped bass as well as the continued refinement of detection techniques.

- 2. Describe your views on the conceptual approach to solve the problem.**

By utilizing the ChesMMAF (combination Federal and State funded) as their sampling platform, the project will obtain very high quality research material at a very low cost. The ChesMMAF collects aggregations of species (besides striped bass), performs stomach analysis and collects physical data. This project will determine the presence or absence of Mycobacteriosis of striped bass but will also have access to all the other information available from the ChesMMAF cruise.

<b>SCORE (Circle one)</b>	<b>Poor</b>				<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b><del>20</del></b>

**B. Soundness of Project Design/Technical Approach (25 points)**

**1. Is there sufficient information to technically evaluate the proposal?**

Yes, this project will use the state of the art detection techniques and build upon the existing data base of Mycobacteriosis infection of striped bass.

**2. What are the strengths/weaknesses of the project design (thoroughness, practicality, methods, integration with other work, etc.)?**

This project will “piggy back” on ChesMMAP (an ongoing research program which performs extensive baywide stratified random sampling) and should be considered a major strength to move this project forward. By utilizing ChesMMAP as a sampling platform the cost of obtaining quality samples is vastly reduced. This project complements prior work and builds upon earlier findings but still provides an accurate measure of current Mycobacteriosis infection rate of striped bass in Chesapeake Bay.

<b>SCORE (Circle One)</b>	<b>Poor</b>					<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<del><b>20</b></del>	<b>25</b>

**C. Project Management and Experience/Qualifications of Personnel (15 points)**

**What is your opinion of the experience and capabilities of the Principal Investigator(s) to manage and conduct the work, the availability of facilities, and education and experience of assisting personnel.**

I am familiar with both co-PI's and they are leaders in their fields and highly regarded by colleagues. The facilities at VIMS are excellent.

<b>SCORE (Circle one)</b>	<b>Poor</b>			<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<del><b>15</b></del>

**D. Project costs (15 points)**

**Is the budget realistic and reasonable? Indicate any unreasonable costs.**

Considering the value of the information this work will provide, the cost of this project is extremely reasonable, with one exception. The project application is a public document that is circulated prior to the public hearing of all projects. One measure the public and the RFAB use in judging the relative merit of a project is whether or not other sources of funding are part of the budget. Listing the difference between the Federal Rate of F & A (45%) and the agreed upon rate to

the RFAB of F & A (25%) within the VIMS budget infers a contribution. This is misleading to the public (and perhaps some members of the RAFB). A significant portion of the VIMS budget is already supplied from State General Funds. Simply stating the Federal rate is X% and the RAFB rate is Y% should be sufficient. Divergence from the Federal F & A rate is not unique to the VIMS and the RAFB relationship. Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences has recently submitted a proposal to examine the possibility of using aquaculture to enhance horseshoe crab populations for funding to the State of New Jersey, where the standard for indirect costs (to the state of New Jersey) is 10%. In my opinion, it would be more appropriate to list the value of ChesMMAAP sampling on the budget.

<b>SCORE (circle One)</b>	<b>Poor</b>			<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b><del>10</del></b>	<b>15</b>

**E. Value of the Project to Fisheries Managers (25 points)**

**Do you believe the results of this project will further management of the species described? Will the results be useful to managers?**

The potential impact of Mycobacteriosis to Chesapeake Bay origin striped bass and its associated management impacts are tremendous. This project will provide an accurate estimate of infection rate and enable managers to track the trend.

<b>SCORE (circle one)</b>	<b>Poor</b>					<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b><del>25</del></b>

**PLEASE ADD ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS BELOW:**

Due to the significance of the information at a relative low cost, this project should be given a high priority among research projects.